DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 126 977 JC 760 430

AUTHOR Brawer, Florence B.
TITLE A Profile of Religious Studies Instructors in Two-Year Colleges.
INSTITUTION Center for the Study of Community Colleges, Los Angeles, Calif.
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 7p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; Community Colleges; Job Satisfaction; *Junior Colleges; National Surveys; *Religion; Religious Education; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Characteristics; Teacher Qualifications

ABSTRACT

In 1975, the Center for the Study of Community Colleges conducted a national survey of humanities faculty in two-year colleges. This paper summarizes the characteristics of 30 religious studies instructors included in the total sample of 1,493 full- and part-time faculty. Findings of the survey include: (1) 77% of the religious studies instructors were males; (2) 51% were 41 years of age or older at the time of the survey; (3) 100% reported that they were white/Caucasian; (4) 47% had spent no time as either instructors or administrators in secondary schools; (5) 27% reported that they neither subscribed to nor read journals within their discipline while 77% indicated they neither subscribed to nor read professional education journals; (6) 10% claimed to be working toward the master's degree while 23% claimed to be working toward the doctorate; (7) 67% rated what they were presently doing as very attractive, with their second situational choice being a faculty position at a four-year college or university; and (8) religious studies instructors rated self-knowledge/personal identity and knowledge of and interest in community and world affairs as the most important qualities a student should gain from a two-year college education. For the full survey report, see ED 121 358. (JDS)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED126977

CENTER FOR THE STUDY
OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
1047 GAYLEY AVENUE - SUITE 104
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

A PROFILE OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES INSTRUCTORS IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

A nationwide survey of 1493 people teaching the humanities in 156 two-year colleges--carefully selected in terms of locale, control, emphasis, size and age--was conducted in spring, 1975 by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges. The faculty sample was drawn to include proportionate numbers of both full-time and part-time instructors. Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the project revealed demographic data as well as attitudes toward students and the humanities, reference group identification, satisfaction, and preference for further preparation. In this paper the religious studies instructors in the sample are compared with the total group of faculty in art, anthropology, foreign language, history, liberal arts/drama, literature, music, philosophy, political science, religious studies, and social science.

Of the 1493 humanities instructors in 156 two-year colleges who responded to our Faculty Survey, people teaching religious studies represent by far the smallest group. The thirty people in this sample are just 2% of the total population. Therefore we might expect that since they have little impact on the total responses, they might well stand out as quite different from the people in other fields. This notion persists, even though we realize our groups are not totally discrete (people teaching religious studies may occasionally also teach other courses, and vice versa).

Only a handful of the religious studies instructors in this sample had themselves been students in community/junior colleges--20%*, as compared with 25% of the total sample. Eighty-three percent had majored in religious studies while 10% held their highest degree in education and 7% each in history, literature, and philosophy.

Over three-fourths of this group (77%) are males, as compared with 67% of the total population. They tend to be somewhat older than people in other disciplines--27% being 51-55 years as compared with 10% of the total population and 13% (total 6%) being 61 or older. Twenty percent (13% total) are in the 41-45 age bracket. Like the philosophy instructors, all--100%--claim to be white/Caucasian.

Books in the homes in which they were raised are designated as 26-100 for 43% of the religious studies people (26% total). Over 200 books are noted by 30% (38% total).

*All figures are rounded.

JC 760 430

Almost half of these respondents (47%) had spent no years in secondary schools as instructors or administrators (41% total). Ten percent (18% total) designated 5-10 years. Conversely, a sizeable number had held such positions at four-year colleges or universities beyond the level of teaching/research assistant. Of all disciplines, the smallest proportion of religious studies instructors (37%) indicated "none" here (55% total). Serving in one capacity or another at this level were 20% (12% total) who designated 1-2 years.

Within any two-year college religious studies people represented the largest proportion claiming less than one year experience (17%; 7% total). Twenty-seven percent (17% total) had been so employed 11-20 years and 20% (38% total), 5-10 years. These figures, however, are confounded by the fact that many instructors in this area failed to respond to both this item and to the item regarding program directorship. Here 60% said they had not served in this capacity but 37% declined to answer. And again with the item regarding acting as administrators in two-year colleges, 37% did not respond and over half (53%) said none. Twenty-seven percent of the religious studies people had worked 11-20 years in their current institution (15% total); 23% (17% total) 3-4 years; and 20% (42% total), 5-10 years.

Chairpersons

Twenty percent of the religious studies people (15% total) claimed to be currently acting as chairpersons of their departments or divisions. Of these, one-third had previously employed people holding the doctorate (48% total), 17% (5% total) reported administrative pressure to hire doctorate holders and 67% (61% total) indicated plans to so hire. When asked "why," three categories generated 17% of the religious studies instructors' responses: they said they would hire the best person regardless of degree, that doctorate holders are more capable/knowledgeable, and that they were the best qualified applicants. One-third of the people in this discipline reported experiences that showed doctorate holders to be fine/excellent/good teachers. It should be noted here that a number of people teaching religious studies hold the doctorate of divinity, rather than the Ph.D., Ed.D., or D.A.T.

Teaching Hours, Full-Time/Part-Time

One-third of the people in this smallest group teach 13-15 hours per week (32% total) while 30% (9% total) teach 3 hours or less weekly. This suggests a number of people here who would be classified as part-timers, and this is borne out by the fact that 40%, more than any disciplinary group (24% total) indicated part-time status. Employed at jobs in addition to their teaching were 37% of the respondents (26% total). Forty-six percent claimed more

than 40 hours (12% total) and 18% 1-10 and 31-40 hours weekly.

Reference Groups

When asked to rate certain reference groups as sources of advice on teaching, instructors of religious studies rank students first (second for the total) and colleagues second (first for total). Department chairpersons are rated third by both this disciplinary group and the total sample and professional journals, fourth by both groups. For the religious studies instructors, administrators are fifth (last for total); university professors are sixth (fifth, total); programs of professional organizations, seventh (sixth total); and high school teachers last for religious studies people and seventh for the total sample.

When it comes to subscribing to or reading scholarly journals within their specific disciplines, 27% of the religious studies people report none (26% total); 30%, (20% total) two; 20% (16% total) three; and 17% (20% total), one. Few people here subscribe to/read professional education journals (77% none, as compared with 64% of the total sample), while 20% (12% total) suggest they subscribe to and/or read journals or magazines of general interest.

Professional Development

Although two-thirds of the religious studies people and 68% of the total either are not working on any degree or failed to respond to the item regarding degrees for which they are now working, 23% of both groups indicate they are working toward the doctorate. Ten percent of the religious studies instructors and 7% of the total are working on their master's degree.

Fewer religious studies people than any other group beside social scientists say they would like to take steps toward professional development in the next five years. Even so, 73% (86% total) indicate they would like to take such steps. Among these, 36% (32% total) would enroll in courses in a university and 41% (34% total) would get a Ph.D. or Ed.D.

If they had a free summer, 33% of the religious studies people and 53% total would travel; 40% (42% total) would be involved in a combination of meeting classes/doing research/and engaging in workshops; and one-third of both populations would take classes/study/read.

Were they to seek training all over again before teaching, again one-third of each group would do the same/change nothing. Thirteen percent (6% total) would get a higher degree.

Five Years Hence

An extremely high proportion of religious studies people express general satisfaction with their two-year college positions by indicating that five years hence, doing what they are currently doing would appear to be very attractive. This is by far the first choice for this disciplinary group, with 67% so indicating (38% total). Second choice (first for total) is a faculty position at a four-year college or university; tied for third are a faculty position at another community or junior college (fourth for total) and a school outside the United States (third, total). Beyond choices one and two, however, most possibilities for the religious studies people are less than appealing, with the greater number of respondents finding quite unattractive such alternatives as a faculty position in another community or junior college, an administrative position at this type of institution, a position in a professional association, any position but one at the college in which they are functioning, and a non-teaching/non-academic position.

Affiliation

Religious studies people constitute the group that is least likely to affiliate with professional organizations. When asked about memberships in these groups, 43% (23% total) indicated none. Again, few attended regional/national meetings in the three years prior to their completing the Faculty Survey. Only one person reported presenting a paper, 87% indicating none (90% total).

Another measure of affiliation is our group cohesion score, and here we find disparate results. The religious studies people seem to be extremely related to most significant others in their lives. Their cohesion score for the group to which both they and the total sample are most affiliated--friends--is 93% (84% total). They rank other instructors in their field as second, which is third for the total group. Third for the religious studies people is family (second for total) and fourth for both groups is most instructors at their school. Fifth for religious studies instructors are students (sixth for total); then sixth are college administrators (seventh for total) and last are teacher organizations (fifth for total).

Students

Religious studies people differ somewhat from the total group in terms of rating the qualities that students should gain from a two-year college education. Tied for first are self-knowledge/personal identity (first for total) and knowledge of and interest in community and world problems (second for total). Tied for third are knowledge and skills directly applicable to their careers (fifth for total) and

aesthetic awareness (fourth for total). And last for both groups is an understanding and mastery of some academic discipline.

These instructors constitute the single disciplinary group in which no one indicates that none or one should be the number of humanities courses that two-year occupational program students should be required to take. Most (40%), like the total group (35%), say six or more, and 27% (22% total) suggest four.

As for other than course related programs, 77% of the religious studies people (69% total) perceive colloquiums and seminar offerings as too few, and 47% (52% total) see lectures as too few. Exhibits, concerts and recitals, and films are all seen as sufficient, which differentiates this group from the total.

Experience and Curriculum

When it comes to the types of activities they engage in in order to experience the humanities beyond their teaching, religious studies instructors differ in most responses from their counterparts in other fields. Like the total population, over half indicate a combination of attending art museums, shows, exhibits, concerts, theatre, films. Next they select attending classes/lectures/seminars (40% religious studies, 19% total) and then reading (37% religious studies, 50% total). Twenty-three percent of the religious studies instructors point to everyday experiences (16% total) and community service/church work (10% total) while 17% point to records/TV/radio (21% total) and talking with peers/associates (15% total). Ten percent participate in theatre groups/fine arts/opera (16% total) and 7% indicate travel (14% total).

When asked what changes had taken place in the humanities at their schools during the past seven years, like their peers, 30% of the religious studies instructors indicate the addition/improvement of humanities courses. Ten percent note the integration of humanities into interdisciplinary courses (6% total) and improved teaching techniques (4% total). As for changes they would like to see effected, 23% note the addition and improvement of humanities courses (30% total); 20% point to the integration of courses (14% total); and 7%, more extra curricular courses (11% total).

The Colleges

One of the greatest differences between religious studies instructors and their colleagues in other humanities fields is in the control of the institutions with which they are affiliated. Whereas 89% of the total sample are in public colleges and 12% in private, 43% of the religious studies instructors are in public institutions

and 57% in private. As for institutional emphasis, 73% of the religious studies people and 90% of the total are in comprehensive colleges; 11% and 5%, respectively, in vocational-technical institutions; and 23% of the religious studies and 6% of the total in liberal arts colleges.

Institutional age also differentiates the populations. Colleges built 1959 and earlier account for 73% of the religious studies people and 45% of the total; 1960-1969, 17% of the religious studies people and 45% of the total group; 1970-1975, 10% of both samples. Generally, the schools populated by most of the religious studies people are also smaller. Thirty-three percent are in colleges with enrollments up to 499 students (7% total); 20%, 500-999 (7% total); and 27%, 1000-1499 (9% total). This accounts for 80% of the religious studies faculty.

In Sum

Religious studies people differ from the total population in several respects. Not only are the types of institutions in which they teach different, but many characteristics of the instructors themselves are varied. The fact that a local clergyman occasionally teaches a course at the community/junior college accounts in large part for these differences, but other variables may be attributed to the types of people themselves who populate this discipline.

Florence B. Brawer
1976

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

SEP 17 1976

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES